

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 06616 161636Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 6616

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJ: MAJOR PERSONNEL SHAKE-UP IN STRIFE-RIDDEN SERBIAN PARTY

1. SUMMARY: SERBIAN PARTY SECRETARY DJORDJE LAZIC WAS FIRED IN A MAJOR PERSONNEL SHAKE-UP ANNOUNCED AT DEC 13 SERBIAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING. INTERNAL PARTY STRIFE, WHICH IS SUBJECT OF GOSSIP OUTSIDE PARTY, DOMINATED MEETING'S DISCUSSIONS. IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER CENTRAL COMMITTEE RESOLVED OR EXASPERBATED FEUDING BY BRINGING IT OUT IN OPEN, AND BY CONFIRMING NEW SECRETARIAL APPOINTMENT WHICH REEKS OF NEPOTISM. END SUMMARY.

2. SERBIAN LEAUGE OF COMMUNISTS (LCS) SECRETARY DJORDJE LAZIC HAS LEFT OFFICE TO BECOME PRESIDENT OF THE SERBIAN TRADE UNIONS, IT WAS ANNOUNCED AT THE DEC 13 SESSION OF THE LCS CENTRAL COMMITTEE. LAZIC WAS UNEXPECTEDLY APPOINTED SECRETARY TWO YEARS AGO WHEN THE SERBIAN PARTY WAS PREPARING FOR ITS NINTH CONGRESS, HELD IN APR 1974. IT WAS BELIEVED AT THE TIME THAT HIS PREDECESSOR WAS NOT EFFECTIVE IN GETTING THE PARTY IN SHAPE AND MAKING ADEQUATE PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONGRESS. LAZIC CAME ON AS A STRONG, EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATOR AS SECRETARY, AND WAS RETAINED IN THE OFFICE AT THE CONGRESS. HOWEVER, HE HAS NOT BEEN IN THE LIMELIGHT MUCH IN RECENT MONTHS AND HIS

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BELGRA 06616 161636Z

"TRANSFER" TO A NEW JOB MUST BE REGARDED AS A DEMOTION.

3. LAZIC WAS REPLACED BY IVAN STAMBOLIC, A MEMBER OF THE LCS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. STAMBOLIC, BORN NOV 5, 1936 IN BREZOVI KOD IVANJICE, APPEARS TO BE THE SON OR ANOTHER CLOSE RELATIVE OF THE SFRY PRESIDENCY MEMBER FROM SERBIA, PETAR STAMBOLIC, WHO HAILS FROM THE SAME TOWN. ALTHOUGH YOUNG STAMBOLIC HAS HAD AN ACTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL CAREER AS A SOCIO-POLITICAL PROFESSIONAL SINCE HIS ADMISSION TO THE LCY IN 1954, HIS APPOINTMENT INEVITABLY SMACKS OF NEPOTISM--HARDLY SURPRISING IN THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE WITHIN THE SERBIAN PARTY.

4. VUKOJE BULATOVIC WAS "FREED" OF HIS DUTIES ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BECAUSE HE WAS EARLIER APPOINTED CHIEF EDITOR OF POLITIKA. VLADIMIR JOVICIC, SERBIAN SECRETARY FOR CULTURE AND SERBIAN CC MEMBER SINCE 1968, WAS CHOSEN TO FILL SLOT ON EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE VACATED BY BULATOVIC. (BIO DATA ON STAMBOLIC AND JOVICIC PUBLISHED IN POLITIKA, DEC 14.)

5. IN OTHER PERSONNEL CHANGES, MIODRAG DIMOVIC'S REQUEST TO BE RELIEVED OF HIS DUTIES ON THE CC TO PERMIT HIM TO SPEND MORE TIME IN THE PARTY ORGANIZATION OF YUGOSLAV AIRLINES (JAT) WAS APPROVED, AND TOMISLAV VASILJEVIC, A MEMBER OF THE STATUTES COMMITTEE FROM KRAGUJEVAC, WAS FIRED ON THE INITIATIVE OF HIS CITY LC COMMITTEE, BECAUSE HE HAD OPPOSED THE PARTY LINE ON "A NUMBER OF ISSUES". MILJAN COGURIC WAS APPOINTED TO REPLACE VASILJEVIC.

6. WITH EXCEPTION OF LCS PRESIDENT VLASKALIC'S RATHER GENERAL SUMMING UP REMARKS ON ECONOMIC STABILITY, SPEECHES AT CC MEETING ESCHEWED LCY'S CURRENT PREOCCUPATION WITH COMINFORMISM AND FAILED TO TAKE UP TITO'S CHARGE AT LAST WEEK'S LCY PRESIDUM SESSION THAT THE PARTY IS TO BLAME FOR YUGOSLAVIA'S CURRENT ECONOMIC ILLS. INSTEAD, DISCUSSION OF INTERNAL STRIFE WITHIN SERBIAN PARTY DOMINATED SATURDAY'S MEETING. AS SUMMARIZED IN PRESS, REPORT OF EX COM AND PRESIDUM STRESSED I.A. NEED FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM (I.E., DISCIPLINE) AND FOR A MORE OPEN, "DEMOCRATIC" ATMOSPHERE IN PARTY WHICH WILL ENCOURAGE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BELGRA 06616 161636Z

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM AND COUNTERACT PRESENT POWER CONCENTRATIONS OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS. STATUTORY COMMITTEE REPORT NOTED THAT MANY COMPLAINTS AGAINST PARTY MEMBERS TURN OUT TO BE THE RESULT OF PERSONAL VENDETTAS RATHER THAN IDEOLOGICAL DEVIATION.

7. AN EMBASSY CONTACT WHO HAS A FRIEND ON THE SERBIAN CC HAS REPORTED TO US FOR SOME TIME THAT THE LCS IS TORN WITH

INTERNAL STRIFE. HE CLAIMS THAT REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
PRESIDENT DRAGOSLAV MARKOVIC, WHO IS A TITO INTIMATE, IS
HIGHLY UNPOPULAR AMONG SERBS IN AND OUT OF THE PARTY, WHO
REGARD HIM AS INEPT. OUR CONTACT REMARKED LAST WEEK, AFTER
A CONVERSATION WITH HIS FRIEND, THAT THE SERBIAN PARTY IS
BESET WITH LOCAL SQUABBLES WHICH ANOTHER SOURCE TELLS US ARE
POLITICAL POWER FEUDS BETWEEN CLANS FORMED AROUND LOCAL LEADERS,
IN WHICH IDEOLOGY PLAYS NO PART. EXCHANGES BETWEEN
FEUDING MEMBERS CAN BORDER ON VIOLENCE: WE ARE TOLD THAT AN
EXECUTIVE AT THE CRVENA ZASTAVA AUTO PLANT HURLED AN ASHTRAY
AT DRAGOSLAV MARKOVIC, WHILE WORDS BECAME QUITE BITTER IN
AN EXCHANGE BETWEEN CRVENA ZASTAVA AND MEMBERS OF THE
KRAGUJEVAC LC CITY COMMITTEE.

8. COMMENT: IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT PERSONNEL SHAKE-UP AND CALL
FOR MORE DISCIPLINE AT CC SESSION WILL PUT AN END TO
APPARENT WIDE-SPREAD DISSENSION IN LCS. ON THE CONTRARY,
STAMBOLIC APPOINTMENT COULD WELL AROUSE NEW
JEALOUSIES. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD JAZIC DISMISSAL MAY PRESSAGE
SHAKE-UPS IN OTHER REPUBLICAN PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AS WELL.
OMISSION OF DIRECT REFERENCE TO TITO'S TOUGH WORDS ON THE
ECONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LCY MEMBERSHIP AT ALL
LEVELS MAY BE A SYMPTOM OF VERY LACK OF DISCIPLINE AT WHICH
HE WAS AIMING; AND THE SERBIAN CONVULSION MAY BE EARLY
FALL-OUT FROM THE TOUGHER LINE BEING TAKEN. AT ANY RATE, IT
IS CLEAR THAT POLITICAL INFIGHTING AT THE REPUBLICAN LEVEL IS
FIERCE, MAY GET ROUGHER, AND IS ONE REASON WHY TITO OR ANY
OTHER LEADER HAS DIFFICULTIES IN MOVING THIS COUNTRY
AHEAD. SWEITZER

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